

**ADVANCE INFORMATION ON FINAL EXAM  
PHILOSOPHY 162 WINTER, 2008**

The final exam for this class will take place on Monday, March 17, from 11:30 a.m to 2:30 p.m., in Sequoyah 148, our regular classroom. That's soon.

The final exam will consist of two parts. You will have 1.5 hours for each part of the exam. Each part counts equally for purposes of grading. The final exam will focus more on the material we have covered since the midterm exam. No use of books or notes is permitted during this exam.

If you are taking the course on a PASS/NOT PASS basis, you must get (1) a C- or better on the final examination as well as (2) an overall C- average on all course work in order to achieve a PASS grade, with one exception: If you have an A- or better average on the midterm exam and writing assignment, and are enrolled on a PASS/NOT PASS basis, you need not take the final exam in order to earn a PASS grade.

The first hour and a half of the exam will consist of short-answer questions testing comprehension of required readings. You will have some choice as to which questions to answer.

The final hour and a half of the exam will consist of essay questions drawn from the list below. On the actual exam four questions will be set and you will be asked to write essays in response to two of them. Your two essays will count equally for purposes of grading.

1. In "Why Not the Best?", Allen Buchanan and co-authors consider three questions: (1) When and if genetic intervention techniques become available, would it be morally required that parents use them to make their offspring the best they can be? (2) When and if genetic intervention techniques become available, would it be morally permissible for parents to use them at their discretion to make their offspring the best they can be? (3) Should government enforce either the requirement (if there is such a thing) to make one's offspring the best they can be or a prohibition on morally impermissible interventions (if there are any such things) by parents to make their children the best they can be? To simplify, assume the interventions in question are all medical procedures performed on the young child that involve no medical risk of harm to the young child (or to the mother if the child is in utero). State the answers of Buchanan and coauthors to these questions along with their rationales for them and either defend or attack their position.

2. In his essay "Cognitive Disability, Misfortune, and Justice," Jeff McMahan poses this puzzle: If we have an egalitarian obligation to help the disadvantaged, and a greater obligation to help the more disadvantaged, then people who are severely cognitively impaired would seem inevitably to be among the people we are most obligated to aid, and continue aiding, no matter how many resources we have already showered on them. How does McMahan resolve his puzzle to his own satisfaction in this essay? Either attack McMahan's proposed solution or defend his position from some plausible criticism.

3\*\*. In his essay "A Right to Self-Termination?" J. David Velleman raises a doubt about the advisability of changing the law to allow physicians to assist their patients to commit suicide under specified conditions. He argues that committing suicide for a broad class of seemingly innocuous reasons violates the duty to respect rational nature that is the source of human dignity and, hence, is morally impermissible. State his main arguments on this issue and defend or attack his conclusions. Your discussion should consider a significant objection directed against his position by Frances Kamm.

4\*\*. Should there be a legal right to physician-assisted suicide—that is, should a medical doctor be legally permitted to comply with the voluntary request of a competent adult patient for assistance in ending his or her life, under certain circumstances? Why or why not? Your essay should consider some significant arguments from course readings on this issue. You should in particular pay attention to some arguments from course readings that oppose the position you

defend—namely, Kass or Weithman or possibly Emanuel on the one side, or Brock, Kamm, or J. Dworkin on the other side.

[One or the other but not both of these two questions marked by asterisks (\*\*) will be posed on the actual final exam.]]

5. In “Women and Theories of Global Justice” Martha Nussbaum considers the proposal that whereas each of us ought morally to condemn and struggle against violations of all human rights in our own country, in the arena of international relations we ought to support toleration of some rights violations. Every nation that respects and promotes the basic rights of its subjects ought to be welcomed as a member in good standing of the international community of nations. Each nation belonging to this community should tolerate nonbasic rights violations in other nations including for example the violation of women’s rights to equal treatment, the right to full freedom of religion (no state-established religion), and the right to political democracy. Toleration among members of the international community of nations involves refraining from exerting any pressure on nations that violate nonbasic rights to change their ways. Nussbaum focuses her discussion on the example of the rights of women to equal treatment. Opposed to the “toleration” view would be a cosmopolitan doctrine that holds that to the extent that we have a duty to promote justice, that duty pays no heed to national borders and requires that we ought to act in whatever way would be most effective to secure the greater fulfillment of the human rights of people in all countries. –Defend the “toleration view” or the “cosmopolitan doctrine” or some alternative of your devising. Your discussion should consider the arguments of Nussbaum and might (but need not) consider related arguments by Thomas Pogge and Michael Walzer.

6. Michael Walzer and Elizabeth Anscombe both agree that noncombatants (those not engaged in waging war) have serious rights not to be deliberately attacked by combatants in war. They disagree as to whether or not these rights may ever be overridden by competing moral considerations. Walzer’s view on this issue is contained in his doctrine of “supreme emergency.” State Anscombe’s and Walzer’s positions on this issue and defend or attack one or the other or both of them.

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Note on the short-answer questions. They will be drawn from the required readings in the last two weeks of the course and from these readings: Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality,” & “Outsiders: Our Obligations to Those Beyond Our Borders,” Richard Miller, “Cosmopolitan Respect and Patriotic Concern” & “Moral Closeness and World Community,” Garrett Cullity, “Asking Too Much,” Thomas Hurka, “The Justification of National Partiality” (just the section on “Partiality and History” that considers whether or not partiality to conationals is justified), and Thomas Pogge, “Assisting’ the Global Poor,” G. E. M. Anscombe, “War and Murder, and M. Walzer, chs. 14-16 of *Just and Unjust Wars* (on “supreme emergency”)

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I’ll hold an extra office hour Friday 1-4 and will check email sometimes over the weekend. I’m happy to discuss with you your interpretations of the readings or arguments you are formulating. Questions that are the equivalent of “what’s the answer to question X” are of course not questions I can answer, in fairness to all of you.  
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If you wish to be informed of your exam results, here are some options:  
Write your preferred email address at the top of the essay section of your final exam; I’ll send you a notice of your final exam and course grades.  
Write “Buckley Waiver OK” and sign your name on the front of the essay section of your final exam; I’ll place your graded exam in a bin under the Philosophy faculty mail slots, oppise the elevator entry, 7<sup>th</sup> floor, HSS Bldg.  
Exams can also be retrieved from me during spring quarter during office hours. Best wishes on all of your finalexams. Have as good quarter break.—RJA.